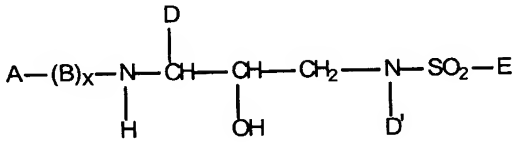
**Amendment to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

**Listing of Claims:**

Claim 1 (currently amended): A compound of formula I:



(I)

wherein:

A is selected from the group consisting of ~~H, Het, $R^1$-Het,~~ -$R^1$-$C_1$-$C_6$ alkyl, which may be optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from the group consisting of hydroxy, $C_1$-$C_4$ alkoxy, ~~Het, -O-Het,~~ -$NR^2$-CO-N($R^2$)($R^2$) and -CO-N($R^2$)($R^2$); ~~and $R^1$-$C_2$-$C_6$-alkenyl, which may be optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from the group consisting of hydroxy, $C_1$-$C_4$-alkoxy, Het, -O-Het, -$NR^2$-CO-N($R^2$)($R^2$) and -CO-N($R^2$)($R^2$);~~

each $R^1$ is independently selected from the group consisting of -C(O)-, -S(O)$_2$-, -C(O)-C(O)-, -O-C(O)-, -O-S(O)$_2$, -$NR^2$-S(O)$_2$-, -$NR^2$-C(O)- and -$NR^2$-C(O)-C(O)-;

each Het is independently selected from the group consisting of $C_3$-$C_7$ cycloalkyl; $C_5$-$C_7$ cycloalkenyl; $C_6$-$C_{10}$ aryl; and 5-7 membered saturated or unsaturated heterocycle, containing one ~~or more heteroatoms~~ heteroatom selected from N, $N(R^2)$, O, S and $S(O)_n$, wherein said heterocycle may optionally be benzofused; and wherein any member of said Het may be optionally substituted with one or more substituents selected from the group consisting of oxo, $-OR^2$, $-R^2$, $-N(R^2)(R^2)$, $-R^2$-OH, -CN, $-CO_2R^2$, $-C(O)-N(R^2)(R^2)$, $-S(O)_2-N(R^2)(R^2)$, $-N(R^2)-C(O)-R_2$, $-C(O)-R^2$, $-S(O)_n-R^2$, $-OCF_3$, $-S(O)_n$-Ar, methylenedioxy, $-N(R^2)-S(O)_2(R^2)$, halo, $-CF_3$, $-NO_2$, Ar and -O-Ar;

each $R^2$ is independently selected from the group consisting of H and $C_1$-$C_3$ alkyl optionally substituted with Ar; with the proviso that when $R^2$ is $C_1$-$C_3$ alkyl substituted with Ar, said Ar may not be substituted with an Ar-containing moiety;

B, when present, is $-N(R^2)-C(R^3)(R^3)-C(O)-$;

x is 0 or 1;

each $R^3$ is independently selected from the group consisting of H, Het, $C_1$-$C_6$ alkyl, $C_2$-$C_6$ alkenyl, $C_3$-$C_6$ cycloalkyl and $C_5$-$C_6$ cycloalkenyl, wherein any member of said $R^3$, except H, may be optionally substituted with one

or more substituents selected from the group consisting of $-OR^2$, $-C(O)-NH-R^2$, $-S(O)_n-N(R^2)(R^2)$, Het, $-CN$, $-SR^2$, $-CO_2R^2$, $NR^2-C(O)-R^2$;

each n is independently 1 or 2;

D and D' are independently selected from the group consisting of Ar; $C_1$-$C_4$ alkyl, which may be optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from $C_3$-$C_6$ cycloalkyl, $-OR_2$, $-R^3$, -O-Ar and Ar; $C_2$-$C_4$ alkenyl, which may be optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from the group consisting of $C_3$-$C_6$ cycloalkyl, $-OR^2$, $-R^3$, -O-Ar and Ar; $C_3$-$C_6$ cycloalkyl, which may be optionally substituted with or fused with Ar; and $C_5$-$C_6$ cycloalkenyl, which may be optionally substituted with or fused with Ar;

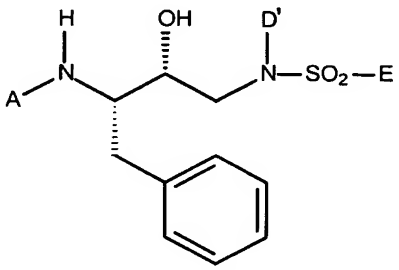
each Ar is independently selected from the group consisting of phenyl; 3-6 membered carbocyclic ring ~~and 5-6 membered heterocyclic ring containing one or more heteroatoms selected from O, N, S, S(O)$_n$ and N(R$^2$)~~, wherein said carbocyclic ~~or heterocyclic~~ ring may be saturated or unsaturated and optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from the group consisting of oxo, $-OR^2$, $-R^2$, $-N(R^2)(R^2)$, $-N(R^2)-C(O)-R^2$, ~~$-R^2$-OH~~ $C_1$-$C_3$ alkyl substituted with -OH and optionally substituted

with Ar, -CN, $-CO_2R^2$, $-C(O)-N(R^2)(R^2)$, halo and $-CF_3$;

E is selected from the group consisting of Het; O-Het; Het-Het; $-O-R^3$; $-NR^2R^3$; $C_1$-$C_6$ alkyl, which may be optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from the group consisting of $R^4$ and Het; $C_2$-$C_6$ alkenyl, which may be optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from the group consisting of $R^4$ and Het; $C_3$-$C_6$ saturated carbocycle, which may optionally be substituted with one or more groups selected from the group consisting of $R^4$ and Het; and $C_5$-$C_6$ unsaturated carbocycle, which may optionally be substituted with one or more groups selected from the group consisting of $R^4$ and Het; and

each $R^4$ is independently selected from the group consisting of $-OR^2$, $-C(O)-NHR^2$, $-S(O)_2-NHR^2$, halo, $-NR^2-C(O)-R^2$ and -CN.

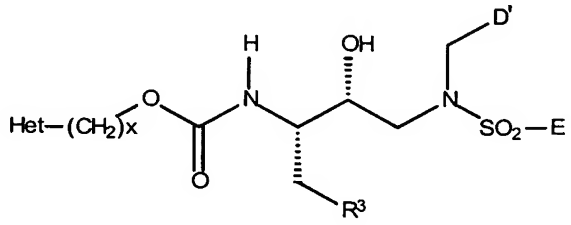
Claim 2 (original): The compound according to claim 1, characterized in that said compound has the structure of formula XXII:




(XXII)

and A, D' and E are defined as in claim 1.

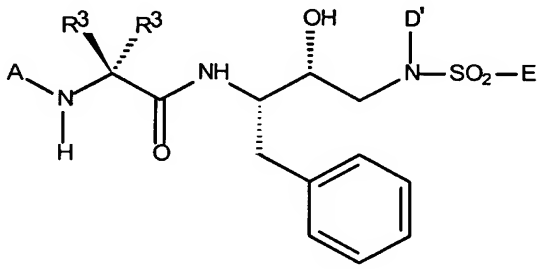
Claim 3 (original): The compound according to claim 1, characterized in that said compound has the structure of formula XXIII:




(XXIII)

and x, Het, $R^3$, D' and E are defined as in claim 1.

Claim 4 (original): The compound according to claim 1, characterized in that said compound has the structure of formula XXXI:




(XXXI)

and A, $R^3$, D' and E are defined as in claim 1.

Claim 5 (currently amended): A compound of formula I, wherein:

A is selected from the group consisting of ~~H,~~ ~~$-R^1$-Het,~~ $-R^1$-$C_1$-$C_6$ alkyl, which may be optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from the group consisting of hydroxy, $C_1$-$C_4$ alkoxy~~, Het and -O-Het, and $-R^1$-$C_2$-$C_6$-alkenyl, which may be optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from hydroxy, $C_1$-$C_4$ alkoxy, Het and -O-Het~~;

each $R^1$ is independently selected from the group consisting of -C(O)-, $-S(O)_2$-, -C(O)-C(O)-, -O-CO-, $-O-S(O)_2-$ and $-NR^2-S(O)_2-$;

each Het is independently selected from the group consisting of $C_3$-$C_7$ cycloalkyl; $C_5$-$C_7$ cycloalkenyl; $C_6$-$C_{10}$ aryl; and 5-7 membered saturated or unsaturated heterocycle, containing one ~~or more heteroatoms~~ heteroatom selected from N, O and S, which may optionally be benzofused; wherein any member of said Het may be optionally substituted with one or more substituents selected from the group consisting of oxo, $-OR^2$, $-R^2$, $-N(R^2)_2$, $-R^2$-OH, -CN, $-CO_2R^2$, $-C(O)-N(R^2)_2$ and $-S(O)_2-N(R^2)_2$;

each $R^2$ is independently selected from the group consisting of H and $C_1$-$C_3$ alkyl;

B, when present, is $-NH-CH(R^3)-C(O)-$;

x is 0 or 1;

$R^3$ is selected from the group consisting of Het, $C_1$-$C_6$ alkyl, $C_2$-$C_6$ alkenyl, $C_3$-$C_6$ cycloalkyl and $C_5$-$C_6$ cycloalkenyl, wherein any member of said $R^3$ may be optionally substituted with one or more substituents selected from the group consisting of $-OR^2$, $-C(O)-NH-R^2$, $-S(O)_n-N(R^2)_2$, Het and -CN;

n is 1 or 2;

D and D' are independently selected from the group consisting of Ar; $C_1$-$C_4$ alkyl, which may be optionally substituted with $C_3$-$C_6$ cycloalkyl or Ar; $C_2$-$C_4$ alkenyl, which may be optionally substituted with $C_3$-$C_6$ cycloalkyl or Ar; $C_3$-$C_6$ cycloalkyl, which may be optionally substituted or fused with Ar; and $C_5$-$C_6$ cycloalkenyl, which may be optionally substituted or fused with Ar; ~~with the proviso that when D is attached to N, D may not be methyl or $C_2$ alkenyl;~~

Ar is selected from the group consisting of phenyl; 3-6 membered carbocyclic ring ~~and 5-6 membered heterocyclic ring containing one or more heteroatoms selected from O, N and S,~~ wherein said carbocyclic ~~or heterocyclic~~ ring may be saturated or unsaturated and optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from the group consisting of oxo, $-OR^2$, $-R^2$, $-N(R^2)_2$,

$-N(R^2)-C(O)R^2$, $-R^2-OH$, $-CN$, $-CO_2R^2$, $-C(O)-N(R^2)_2$, halo and $-CF_3$;

E is selected from the group consisting of Het; $-O-R^3$; $-NR^2R^5$; $C_1$-$C_6$ alkyl, which may be optionally substituted with one or more $R^4$ or Het; $C_2$-$C_6$ alkenyl, which may be optionally substituted with one or more $R^4$ or Het; $C_3$-$C_6$ saturated carbocycle, which may optionally be substituted with one or more $R^4$ or Het; and $C_5$-$C_6$ unsaturated carbocycle, which may optionally be substituted with one or more $R^4$ or Het;

each $R^4$ is independently selected from the group consisting of $-OR^2$, $-C(O)-NHR^2$, $-S(O)_2-NHR^2$, halo and $-CN$; and

each $R^5$ is independently selected from the group consisting of H and $R^3$~~, with the proviso that at least one $R^5$ is not H~~.

Claim 6 (canceled).

Claim 7 (original): The compound according to claim 3, wherein:

$R^3$ is selected from the group consisting of $C_1$-$C_6$ alkyl, $C_2$-$C_6$ alkenyl, $C_5$-$C_6$ cycloalkyl, $C_5$-$C_6$ cycloalkenyl and a 5-6 membered saturated or unsaturated

heterocycle, wherein any member of said $R^3$ may optionally be substituted with one or more substituents selected from the group consisting of $-OR^2$, $-C(O)-NH-R^2$, ~~$-S(O)_nN(R^2)(R^2)_2$~~ $-S(O)_nN(R^2)(R^2)$, Het, $-CN$, $-SR^2$, $-C(O)_2R^2$, $NR^2-C(O)-R^2$; and

D' is selected from the group consisting of $C_1$-$C_3$ alkyl and $C_3$ alkenyl, wherein said alkyl or alkenyl may optionally be substituted with one or more groups selected from the group consisting of $C_3$-$C_6$ cycloalkyl, $-OR^2$, -O-Ar and Ar.

Claims 8-10 (canceled).

Claim 11 (original): The compound according to claim 1, wherein said compound has a molecular weight less than or equal to about 700 g/mol.

Claim 12 (original): A compound according to claim 11, wherein said compound has a molecular weight less than or equal to about 600 g/mol.

Claims 13-15 (canceled).

Claim 16 (currently amended): A pharmaceutical composition effective against viral infection comprising a pharmaceutically effective amount of a compound

according to any one of claims 1-4 ~~and 13-14~~ and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier, adjuvant or vehicle.

Claim 17 (original): The pharmaceutical composition according to claim 16, further comprising an additional anti-viral agent.

Claim 18 (currently amended): A method of using a compound according to any one of claims 1-4 ~~and 13-14~~ as a therapeutic agent against viral infection, said virus requiring an aspartyl protease for an obligatory life cycle event.

Claim 19 (original): The method according to claim 18, wherein said virus is HIV-1, HIV-2, or HTLV.

Claim 20 (currently amended): The use according to any one of claims 1-4 ~~and 13-14~~, for inhibiting enzymatic activity in an aspartyl protease.

Claim 21 (original): The use according to claim 20, wherein said aspartyl protease is HIV protease.

Claim 22 (original): A method for preventing HIV infection in a mammal comprising the step of administering to said mammal a pharmaceutically effective

amount of a pharmaceutical composition according to claim 16 or 17.

Claim 23 (original): A method for treating HIV infection in a mammal comprising the step of administering to said mammal a pharmaceutically effective amount of a pharmaceutical composition according to claim 16 or 17.

Claim 24 (original): The method according to claim 22 or 23, wherein said step of administering comprises oral administration or administration by injection.

Claims 25-27 (canceled).